DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 606 RC 011 593

AUTHOR Nolan, Michael F.; And Others
TITLE Rural Residents in the Ozarks: A Comparison of Migrants and Nonmigrants.
INSTITUTION Missouri Univ., Columbia. Office of Rural Development.
PUB DATE 23 Aug 79
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society (Burlington, Vermont, August 23-26, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Attitudes; *Community Services; Delivery Systems; Demography; *Local Issues; Relocation; Rural Areas; *Rural Development; Rural Population; Social Attitudes; Social Indicators; Tax Allocation; *Urban to Rural Migration
IDENTIFIERS Impact Studies; *Long Term Residents; *Missouri (Ozarks)

ABSTRACT

To compare various socio-demographic indicators and attitudes on community issues of recent urban to rural migrants with those of native residents, personal interviews were conducted with an adult in 3391 households in the 5 county Meramec Area of Missouri during the fall of 1977. Of the respondents, 24% had lived in the county 7 years or less, 32% had lived in the county 8 years or more, and 44% had never lived outside the county. Findings indicated that urban to rural migrants were younger, more educated, and had higher incomes than other residents of the area. All groups were in substantial agreement that tax money should be directed to medical facilities, law enforcement, improved roads, services to senior citizens, and fire protection. There were differences between age groups on spending more tax money to improve schools and build playgrounds but there were few differences among migrants within age groups. Over 66% of respondents felt the county was increasing in population and felt that the change was good. There was wide support for attracting industry, business, services, and new employment opportunities, and moderately strong support for the county to attract tourists and new residents. Migrants and nonmigrants alike desired the same kind of services; while population increase may bring an increased demand on services, it should not result in calls for either new services or a change in the mix of services provided. (NEC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED175606

RURAL RESIDENTS IN THE OZARKS: A COMPARISON OF MIGRANTS AND NONMIGRANTS

MICHAEL F. NOLAN
PAUL LASLEY
GARY GREEN
WILLIAM D. HEFFERNAN

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65211

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gary Green

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The authors wish to express their appreciation to the helpful comments they have received from colleagues, in particular Rex R. Campbell and Daryl Hobbs. We are also indebted to the University of Missouri, Office of Rural Development for providing the resources which allowed the study to be done.

Prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, August 23-26, 1979 Burlington, Vermont

RC 011593

Rural Residents in The Ozarks:
A Comparison of Migrants and Nonmigrants

The impacts of past migration trends on rural communities has been a productive line of inquiry for social scientists during the past three decades. Currently, the consequences of the traditional rural-to-urban flow for rural communities are quite well understood (e.g., loss of viability of rural trade centers, difficulty in providing services, etc.). However, the effects of the recent reversal in the traditional migration pattern for rural communities, which expected to be "left behind" forever, are not nearly so well known.

While one can envision numerous positive benefits (e.g., more viable trade centers, improved tax bases, etc.), two broad categories of adjustment problems accompanying growth also can be forseen. On the macro level are the issues surrounding the sudden influx of people and the increased demand on community services and supportive institutions which are often underfinanced, over-extended or nonexistent in many rural communities. On the micro or situational level, divergent belief/value systems and/or diverse socio-economic statuses between migrants and nonmigrants may place strain on the social bonds of rural communities. This study examines the extent to which these micro level differences exist and thus contributes to an understanding of the consequences of urban-to-rural migration for rural areas.

With few exceptions, the effects and implications of urban-to-rural migration on rural communities have failed to receive much attention due to the recency of the phenomenon. We are so accustomed to thinking of rural to urban migration, even our vernacular indicates an urban bias. For example, "counterstream" migration or "reverse" migration both suggest we were moving "forward" and now are moving backwards. The suddenness and magnitude of urban to rural

migration patterns tend to suggest some problematic consequences for community integration and planning for rural areas. If rural communities are to plan for change, it is imperative to empirically examine the phenomenon. While the lessons learned from the rural to urban migration patterns of the past can be beneficial, it cannot be assumed that the consequences of urban to rural migration will be of the same character and produce the same results.

Although the extent of the trend will not be adequately assessed until after the 1980 Census, it does seem clear that the current trends are pervasive. For example, for the period 1970-75, Beale reported that 37 percent of the national population increase occurred in nonmetropolitan areas, compared with only 10 percent during the decade of the 60's. He went on to note that "the nonmetropolitan growth rate exceeded that in metropolitan areas solely because of migration. Natural increase - the excess of births over deaths - continues to be somewhat higher in the metropolitan areas because of the age composition."[1]

The Ozark region has not been immune to this trend. As early as 1970, Green et al reported on the influx of migrants into four relatively small Ozark communities.[2] More recently, Campbell et al reported on the reversal of the pattern of nonmetropolitan out migration.[3] Their analysis indicated the reversal was most distinct in Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma of the five state Ozark region.

This study documents the extent of the population shift in five Ozark counties in Missouri. It describes the structure of the population, compares migrants and nonmigrants on various socio-demographic indicators, and examines the extent of agreement between migrants and nonmigrants on a number of community issues. Throughout, the primary objective was to offer a portrait of the new arrivals by comparing them with native residents. The extent to which the two groups are similar or dissimilar in terms of personal characteristics and their

value/belief patterns about the community's future needs, will enhance predictions about the nature of the transition from a declining to a growing area.

Theoretical Overview

The literature on urban to rural migration, while not extensive, has had three major themes: (1) those studies which have tried to document the extent and nature of the trends in the aggregate;[4] (2) residential preference studies;[5] and (3) characteristics of urban to rural migrants.[6]

The extent of the urban to rural migration pattern, both for the United States and the Ozark region was reported earlier. The residential preference literature likewise had one major theme throughout; people prefer living in nonmetropolitan areas or places spatially removed from central cities. The reasons given for desiring to live in nonmetropolitan areas tended to be non-economic as contrasted to the economic explanations used to account for rural to urban migration.[7]

The literature on characteristics of urban to rural migrants is ambiguous. Kirschenbaum, using 1960 Census Public use one-in-a-thousand sample, found that migrants to rural areas tended to be from upper white collar and lower blue collar occupational strata.[8] Graber examined migration to a rural mountain community and noted a sectivity toward younger, higher status migrants when compared with nonmigrants.[9] DeJong and Humphrey in their study of metro to nonmetro migrants in Pennsylvania, reported a tendency for migrants to be younger, higher socio-economic status household heads with a smaller household size when compared with migrants in the nonmetropolitan to metropolitan stream.[10] Moreover, the differences between the two streams increased in the decade between 1960 and 1970.

One of the problems of nonmetropolitan migration research is that it has tended to focus on characteristics of areas rather than on characteristics

of migrants and nomigrants.[11] In addition, much of the research has relied on the Census Public Use Sample as a source of data which offers only a limited array of comparative data for large population aggregates (e.g., states). This study, by focusing on one area and by utilizing primary data adds depth of understanding to the trends noted in previous research on the topic.

Methodology

The focus of this study is five counties in the south central region of Missouri. The five counties are in a six county grouping known as the Meramec Area, a label we will adopt for the sake of convenience. The area is approximately 75-150 miles from the St. Louis Metropolitan Area which minimizes the typical "suburban sprawl" which has effected many rural areas in close proximity to SMSA's.

The Meramec region is located within the Ozark-Quachita sub region of the Ozarks which has had, "for the most part, a high degree of change reflecting the presence of retirement and recreational settlements."[12] Morrison and Wheeler noted that the Ozark-Quachita uplands encompasses "the largest and most noticeable area of nonmetropolitan revival in the United States."[13] All five counties in the study area have experienced population increases during the period of 1970-75 which were equally attributable to natural increase and in-migration.

The data were collected by personal interviews with an adult in all households located in townships which contained no town or village larger than 500 people. Twenty-four townships in the five counties met this standard. These criteria were used in order to insure the population would be rural. We estimated about 85 percent of the households were interviewed, but an accurate figure is impossible to obtain given the remoteness of the area and the difficulty in ascertaining whether a house was occupied. If there is one

systematic shortfall in the interview coverage, it is with those who own dwellings which are occupied only on weekends or during the vacation periods. Results which follow are based on personal interviews conducted with an adult in 3391 households in the five county region during the fall of 1977.

We focused our comparison of migrants on two categories of variables: the traditional socio-demographic factors which are found in much of the migration literature; and a series of subjective items related to the respondents perceptions of community goals and objectives. In addition, we constructed the migration variable so that it would take into account both place of origin and recency of migration.

Analysis

In examining migrant status we looked at the number of years the respondent had lived in the county in which they were residing at the time of the interview. A three category classification system was used. The first category (7 years or less) contained those respondents who had moved to the county since 1970. They constituted 24 percent of our respondents. The second category (8 years or more) contained persons who had lived outside the county before 1970 (32 percent of our sample), and thus could be considered a migrant, albeit not a recent one. The third group (44 percent) contained those respondents who had never lived outside the county.

When time lived in the area was related to place of origin , the impact of urban to rural migration trend is not particularly pronounced. While 44 percent of the recent migrants came from large cities, 42 percent of the not so recent migrants (8+ years) did likewise. It should be noted, however, that 62 percent of the recent migrants did come from either a large city or a large town, and while the correlation between recency of migration and point of origin is far from perfect, the "less than seven year category" is made up largely of people

from places other than more traditionally thought of as rural. In constructing our measure of migration, we incorporated recency and place of origin into a single index. Five categories resulted ranging from urban-recent migrants to life-long residents. These constitute the principle basis of the comparisons reported in Table 1, 2, and 3.[14]

(TABLE 1 HERE)

In examining the community goals and tax items (Table 2), the principal point of interest is the general lack of any marked differences among the migrant status categories. Each of the five groups were nearly equal in their support for spending more tax money on medical facilities, law enforcement, improved roads, services to senior citizens and fire protection. Ranking the various issues within each category produced very similar patterns. For example, "better medical facilities" had the highest degree of support of any item for each of the five groups. Furthermore, respondents in each category were least favorable toward directing more tax dollars to improving trash collection and providing special water districts. Overall, there was a substantial agreement among the migrant categories on where tax money should be directed.

(TABLE 2 HERE)

While there appeared to be some small differences among categories on two of the tax items (schools and parks), these differences were not based on migrant status. While it seemed as if recent rural migrants were more favorable than other groups toward directing more tax money to improve schools and build parks and playgrounds; when age was controlled, this relationship larely disappeared. There were differences between age groups on the school and parks items, but there were few differences among migrants within age groups.

For the community goals and perceptions of population change items, (Table 3) much the same holds true. The differences among the migrant categories were, in

all cases, small. Over two-thirds of the respondents in every category felt the county was increasing in population; they were equally divided as to whether the increase was small or large, and the majority felt that the change was good for the county. There was wide support for attracting industry, businesses, services, new employment opportunities and moderately strong support for the county to attract tourists and new residents.

(TABLE 3 HERE)

Conclusions

We found some differences when comparing migrant categories and life long residents across a variety of socio-demographic indicators, i.e., education, income, occupation and age. The findings support much of the migration literature which characterized the urban to rural migrant as younger, more educated and having higher incomes than other residents of the area.

The small differences among the migrant status categories on the socio-demographic variables did not seem to carry over into the value items. Relatively small differences were found when comparing responses to where tax dollars should be spent. There was a high degree of consensus about these issues, independent of length of residence in the community or place of origin. These findings suggest that while population increases may bring an increased demand on services, it should not result in calls for either new services or a change in the mix of services provided. Migrants and nonmigrants alike desire the same kind of services.

The apparent consensus across migrant categories regarding the magnitude and direction of population change, the value attached to the population change and preferred future directions of the county suggests a rather smooth transition from a declining to a growing region. Thus far, effects of the urban to rural residents, and the transition may well be accomplished with considerably

less trauma than the rural-to-urban migration of a generation ago. A number of factors seem to contribute to this. First, it is important to keep in mind that the rural to urban migration was largely motivated by economic considerations. The rapid industrialization of agriculture, creating masses of unemployed and underemployed persons without abilities to adapt to urban environments, created many problems for both individuals and structures. Not only were the rural to urban migrants often ill equipped to enter into a "alien urban environment, but they were very dissimilar to their urban counterparts in terms of socio-economic status.

Clearly, the motivations of migrants plays an important role in the nature of the transition. The literature on rural to urban migration is filled with accounts of rural residents being forced to seek employment in urban areas. The scant literature on urban to rural migration indicates the motivation is oriented towards "getting out of the city" or "away from the hassles of city life."[16] It is quite plausible that the noneconomic motivations for urban to rural migration produces an ideology or justification to keep the community rural. The geographic nature of the study area permits a substantial population increase without producing "crowding effects." In the Meramec area the new migrants have yet to strain the existing community infrastructure which may account for why two-thirds of the respondents felt the county should attract new residents. However, as demands of services increase, and priorities are established, one might hypothesize a change in the degree of relative consensus. A final moderating factor is the significant number of retirees and self employed persons moving into the area which does not threaten the existing labor force.

Many questions remain unanswered regarding the implications of "counter-stream" migration on rural areas, although this study suggests that the transition may be slow enough to allow institutional adjustments to occur without

adverse effects. While a change in demand for services may occur through sheer growth in numbers, it would appear the new residents will not make different demands than the long term residents. There are some strong differences of opinion among rural residents on what future directions their community should take, but these appear to be unrelated to where one comes from or how long one has lived there. In any event, the implications of the urban-to-rural migration phenomenon are significant enough to warrant more research on the probable consequences and adjustments processes.

Table 1

Relationship Of Migrant Status To Income, Age and Education

	Migrant Status					
	Urban Recent	Rural Recent	Urban Not Recent	Rural Not Recent	Lifelong Resident	Cramer's V
	-Percent					
Income						.09
Less than $3,000	8.9	11.3	16.2	24.4	21.5	
3,000 - 5,999	24.8	26.4	31.9	27.5	28.6	
6,000 - 9,999	28.8	27.4	23.7	22.5	26.2	
10,000 - 14,999	21.1	25.1	19.2	15.2	16.4	
15,000 - +	15.4	12.6	9.0	10.4	7.3	
(N)	403	239	520	414	1164	
Education						.15
11 years or less	42.0	47.2	57.0	64.9	66.5	
12-15 years	47.7	42.8	36.4	31.1	31.7	
16 years or more	10.3	10.0	6.6	4.0	1.8	
(N)	436	271	561	453	1303	
Age						.12
Less than 30	12.0	25.5	6.7	8.7	16.9	
30-49	31.8	42.1	28.9	27.7	29.7	
50-64	32.3	18.5	27.5	30.5	25.9	
65 or More	23.9	14.0	37.0	33.1	27.5	
(N)	440	271	571	459	1311	

Table 2

Relationship Of Migrant Status To Community Goals And Tax Items

Community Goals & Tax Items	Migrant Status					
More Tax money should be directed toward:	Urban Recent (N=302)	Rural Recent (N=206)	Urban Not Recent (N=416)	Rural Not Recent (N=330)	Lifelong Resident (N=916)	Cramer's V
	- - -

Table 3

Relationship of Migrant Status To Community Goals And Population Change Items

Community Goals & Population Change Items	Migrant Status					Cramer's V
	Urban Recent (N-306)	Rural Recent (N=175)	Urban Not Recent (N=461)	Rural Not Recent (N=354)	Lifelong Residents (N-996)	
	-Percent-					
Perception of Population Change						.10
Increase	91	88	88	83	78	
Decrease	3	3	5	8	11	
No Change	6	9	7	9	11	
Amount of Change						.09
Large Increase	45	42	49	42	41	
Small Increase	53	55	46	52	48	
Large Decrease	0	0	1	0	3	
Small Decrease	2	3	4	6	8	
Population Change						.07
Good	80	77	73	73	68	
Bad	14	16	19	16	21	
Neither	6	7	8	11	11	
County Should Discourage People & Industry From Moving In						.06
Yes	10	12	16	12	12	
No	90	88	84	88	88	
Try to Attract Tourist						.04
Yes	64	67	60	61	60	
No	36	33	40	39	40	
Provide More Business & Services						.04
Yes	88	86	86	87	89	
No	12	14	14	13	11	
Bring In New Employment						.06
Yes	93	93	93	95	96	
No	7	7	7	5	4	
Attract New Residents						.07
Yes	78	75	73	76	70	
No	22	25	27	24	30	

FOOTNOTES

1. Beale, C., "The Recent Shift of United States population to Nonmetropolitan Areas," 1970-75. International Regional Science Review, 1977, 2, 113-122.
2. Green, B., et al., Migration into Four Communities in The Ozarks Region. Fayetteville: Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 756, 1970.
3. Campbell, R., et al., Population Change in the Ozarks Region 1970-1975. (A report to the Ozarks Regional Commission. Columbia, MO Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1978)
4. Beale, op cit. and Campbell, 1978, op cit.
5. Carpenter, E., "The Potential For Population Dispersal; A Closer Look at Residential Locational Preferences." Rural Sociology, 1977, 43, 352-370; Blackwood, L., & Carpenter, E., "The Importance of Anti-Urbanism in Determining Residential Preferences and Migration Patterns. Rural Sociology, 1978, 43, 31-47; Fuguitt, G. & Zuiches, J., "Residential Preferences and Population Distribution." Demography, 1975, 12, 491-504; Ryan, V., et al., Community Size Preference Patterns Among Indiana Residents: Implication for Population Redistribution Policies. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University of Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 55, 1974; Dillman, D. & Dobash, R., Preferences for Community Living and Their Implications for Population Redistribution. Pullman: Washington Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, 64, 1972; De Jong, G. and Sell R., Residential Preferences and Migration Behavior. Report submitted to the Center for Population Research, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973.

6. De Jong, G. & Humphrey, C., "Selected Characteristics of Metropolitan-to-Nonmetropolitan Area Migrants: A Study of Population Redistribution in Pennsylvania." Rural Sociology, 1976, 41, 526-538; Hansen, N., The Future of Nonmetropolitan America. Lexington, Mass. D.C. Heath, 1973; Fredrickson, C., The Characteristics of Immigration to Nonmetropolitan Urban Places, 1955-1960. Madison, Wi.: Center for Demography and Ecology, Working Paper 74-10, 1974; Kirschenbaum, A., "Patterns of Migration from Metropolitan Nonmetropolitan Areas: Changing Ecological Factors Affecting Family Mobility," Rural Sociology, 1971, 36, 314-325; Bowles, G., "Contributions of Recent Metro/Nonmetro Migrants to the Nonmetro Population and Labor Force," Agricultural Economics Research, 1978, 30 (4) 15-21.
7. Shaw, R., Migration Theory and Fact: A Review and Bibliography of Current Literature. Regional Science Research Institute, Philadelphia, 1975.
8. Kirschenbaum, op cit.
9. Graber, E., "Newcomers and Oldtimers: Growth and Change in a Mountain Town." Rural Sociology, 1974, 39, 504-513.
10. De Jong and Humphrey, op cit.
11. Ibid.
12. Campbell, 1978, op cit.
13. Morrison, P. & Wheeler, J., "Rural Renaissance in America." Population Bulletin 1976, 31, 5-22.
14. Tests of significance are not reported in Tables 1, 2 and 3 due to the fact that we are dealing with a population rather than a sample.

15. We also conducted a preliminary analysis of occupational difference among the five migration categories. Our analysis largely supported previous research by Kirschenbaum (1971) which suggested that migrants to rural areas tend to be drawn from blue collar occupations. We found that nearly 70 percent of the employed residents in the four migrant groups came from occupations that would be classified as either craftsmen, operative or laborer. Only 14 percent of the migrants were from the higher level white collar occupations. It is also important to note that at least 30 percent of the respondents in each of the five migrant status categories were retired.

16. Shaw, op cit.